

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF RAMSEY  
ANOKA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, October 27, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Jeff Menth  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Receive Updates on Ramsey Gateway Improvements Alternatives Analysis and Value Engineering**

City Engineer Westby provided a brief background on the case.

Dan Lonnes, Bolton and Menk, provided background information on the Ramsey Gateway vision for Highway 10 which would include grade separation at Sunfish Lake Boulevard and Ramsey Boulevard. He stated that the corridor study was refined into the Gateway vision and reviewed the next steps that would further refine that vision. He provided an update on funding received and associated deadlines. He reviewed some of the next steps that would be required to meet those deadlines, noting that a few things may change in the proposed layout through that process and the process of value engineering.

Joe MacPherson, Anoka County Engineer, commented that the State will be involved in the process very early so that any of the comments received through the value engineering study can be incorporated into the plans and design.

Mr. Lonnes stated that after the refinements have been made, they will hold another public open house to present those proposed plans. He provided details on the public involvement process that has occurred and will occur. He provided details on the proposed plans and alternatives for

Ramsey Boulevard, along with possible refinements, potential costs, and other items for consideration. He also provided proposed plans and alternatives for Sunfish Lake Boulevard, along with possible refinements, potential costs, and other items for consideration. He reviewed the recommended next steps to move into the value engineering study along with the additional steps involving input from adjacent property owners. He also reviewed the next steps overall.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the roundabout would be on ground level or elevated for Ramsey Boulevard.

Mr. Lonnes replied that the roundabout would be elevated.

Councilmember Riley referenced Ramsey Boulevard and the properties that may need to be purchased. He referenced the properties that have already been purchased and asked if those would need to be reimbursed to the RALF fund.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that one of the parcels is City owned and the other parcels have been purchased with RALF funds. He confirmed that those purchased would need to be reimbursed to the RALF funds.

Mr. Lonnes replied that does not change the comparisons because those are fixed outcomes.

Councilmember Specht stated that he supports the recommended options and would like to preserve the highest number of businesses possible. He stated that he also likes the Sunfish Lake frontage road.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that the proposal for Ramsey Boulevard seems similar to Maple Grove, which has two roundabouts.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that public safety has concern with too many access points on a dead-end street and that is why the frontage road option was preferred for Sunfish Lake from public safety and economic development standpoints.

Mayor LeTourneau asked if two lanes would be able to extend across the bridge and through the roundabouts.

Mr. Lonnes replied that as shown one lane would be dropped going into the roundabout which would result in a narrow bridge over the railroad but confirmed that there are alternatives and there will be future discussions as to the best fit for that railroad bridge.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that the community continues to grow, and he would want to ensure that this is built to address that future capacity. He stated that he would like to build this once and build it right as it will be more costly to make improvements in the future.

Councilmember Menth asked how a four-lane road for Ramsey Boulevard would flow going across Ramsey Boulevard, with vehicles wanting to access Highway 10 east.

Mr. Lonnes replied that there would be a lane drop prior to entering the roundabout, which would be pretty straightforward. He stated that if the lane is not dropped, there would be one lane that exited onto the highway with the other lane continuing straight.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that his concern would be that the lane drop would create a pinch point at the bridge which would cause a backup.

Mr. Lonnes replied that currently there is not a volume that justifies the multilane roundabout, as a multilane roundabout can cause additional confusion.

Mr. MacPherson noted that will be part of the analysis that will still need to be completed. He stated that the nice thing about the roundabout option is that the turn lanes do not need to be included in the bridge, as that additional width increases cost. He stated that provisions can be added in the case that an additional roundabout lane needs to be added in the future. He stated that if the traffic volumes for the next ten to 15 years do not warrant an additional lane, they would recommend the one lane roundabout option at this time.

Councilmember Riley referenced Sunfish Lake Boulevard and the tight diamond option and asked for additional information on why that option was dismissed.

Mr. Lonnes stated that the tight diamond was not dismissed in entirety. He explained that space wise it would be tight and operationally would cause stacking. He noted that off ramp would also be expensive to build. He stated that half of the tight diamond is still in the mix, but it will be a variation.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill noted that the southern half of the leg is a City road while the northern half is County.

Mayor LeTourneau asked if the ramp could be extended to make the slope less impactful in terms of stacking.

Mr. Lonnes replied that could be done but they do not want that level of stacking and would like to avoid that.

Councilmember Menth asked for input on the traffic control at the intersection.

Mr. Lonnes replied that currently it is shown as a stop sign but noted that additional tests would be run.

Mr. MacPherson replied that the north/south road would be a through movement uncontrolled and the ramp would be the side street stop.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill asked if a traffic signal would assist in improving the intersection grade of E.

Mr. Lonnes replied that a traffic signal would not be warranted.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the traffic control at Sunfish and Riverdale would be a four way stop.

Mr. Lonnes provided details on the traffic control proposed. He stated that additional tests would be run on the stop sign options.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the access road for the two businesses and asked if it would be a better option to talk with the business owner prior to doing the value engineering study. She stated that if they were a willing property owner that may assist in the study.

Mr. Lonnes stated that they will attempt to gather the feedback concurrently.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill encouraged the Council to look at that area. He stated that Countryside Services needs more space, and the City will look to work with the business to find another location in Ramsey for that business.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that the property acquisition model seems more forward thinking and believes that this could be a good time to work with that business.

Councilmember Specht commented that the preferred recommendation seems to make sense as it pulls the direct traffic away from the business driveways.

Mayor LeTourneau commented that option would still impact a number of residential properties. He asked if the road could be extended to cover all the properties.

Mr. Lonnes confirmed that there would be opportunities to work with those property owners.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that there would be a concern from public safety to have that many residential properties on a private driveway that would not belong to an HOA.

Councilmember Menth asked why it would be considered a private driveway and not a City road.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that the solid black line would be a City road, whereas the dotted line would be considered a private driveway. He noted that topic would continue in future discussions.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would still prefer the tight diamond option.

Mr. MacPherson replied that having the value engineering study at this time will provide a fresh set of eyes on the options and perhaps provide another layout or schematic that could save money or add value.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would like input from the businesses in regard to the northern option as the preferred recommendation seems to be the longest path to access those businesses.

Councilmember Menth commented that the first option is dangerous and barely functional, and the other option alleviates those issues.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed with the comments of Councilmember Menth. She stated that the longer option also allows traffic to move fairly quickly. She asked the intention of the yellow arrows.

Mr. Lonnes replied that those would be potential at grade access points onto the frontage road.

Councilmember Riley commented in the relocated access that could result in Ramsey losing a restaurant as that would take away from their patio.

Mr. Lonnes replied that it seems that the patio could be kept but noted that this is a high-level design.

Mayor LeTourneau encouraged that idea to be kept in mind as this moves forward as he would not want to lose that business.

Councilmember Specht asked if there has been input from that business.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that Plants and Things is concerned that this would be a major disruption to their business and if a sliver purchase is necessary, they would prefer to sell entirely and relocate.

Mr. Lonnes stated that they would have to take this to the level of the best operational design and needed right-of-way and then go through a valuation process based on the actual needs.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that there could be redevelopment potential for that site that could be reviewed.

Councilmember Kuzma commented that while that option may be safer, that seems to be too long to access those businesses.

Mr. MacPherson provided details on another option that was reviewed to provide access to the businesses. He stated that perhaps there is one way in and one way out which would help to accomplish the goals.

Councilmember Menth stated that he spoke with the restaurants and businesses in the strip mall and that parking is full along with the gravel area. He stated that if the gravel is taken away that will reduce parking further. He stated that if Plants and Things wants to move and is acquired completely, perhaps the roundabout could be moved to the west.

Mr. Lonnes replied that he reviewed that option, but they would also have to contend with the grade difference.

Mayor LeTourneau asked the possibility to take advantage of this energy and make the projects on Highway 10 more concurrent. He asked how this could be expedited to possibly move ahead with the Anoka improvements, which would combine construction of both the Anoka and Ramsey projects into two years rather than four.

Elwyn Tinklenberg provided details on the bonding bill funds and input he received related to program delivery funds and the intent for some of those funds to be spent at Sunfish and Ramsey Boulevards. He stated that MnDOT also believed that this should be a priority because of the federal funding deadlines. He stated that MnDOT stated that they can meet the 2023/2024 timeline and support that timeline. He agreed that if there is a way to accelerate this, the City would be in a good position to do that and gain additional funds. He stated that there seems to be a willingness to move this ahead and fund it.

Jennifer Wiltgen, MnDOT, stated that related to schedule, she believes that 2023/2024 is an aggressive schedule when it comes to advancing projects, especially projects with federal funding as there is a specific process that needs to be followed. She stated that they are very supportive, and the District Engineer is supportive of the project. She commented that they are committed to moving this project forward as much as possible and on an accelerated schedule, as much as they can, but with the recognition that they need to coordinate as much as possible with other projects (including the Anoka projects). She stated that Ramsey moved their projects forward and they will work as best as they can to coordinate and move through, making sure that they do as much as they can to mitigate construction. She commented that it has been great to work with Ramsey and Anoka County, as they have taken great leadership.

Councilmember Menth asked the next step from here.

Mr. Tinklenberg stated that the City's plan would go back to the next legislative session requesting additional funds. He noted that there are also applications for other funding that may be available. He stated that there has been terrific cooperation and the City needs to continue to push this forward and build on the momentum that has been built.

Mr. MacPherson reviewed the next steps, which will begin with the value engineering study. He stated that they will continue to move forward to ensure that this can be delivered on time.

Mayor LeTourneau thanked everyone for their efforts in supporting this project.

**2.02: Discuss Resolution #20-225 for New Curbside Recycling Contract with ACE Solid Waste, Inc.**

It was the consensus of the Council to defer this topic to another meeting.

**3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION**

**3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar**

Noted.

**4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT**

None.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*